

14
TWO
LETTERS
TO A
FRIEND,

Concerning the
DISTEMPERS
OF THE
Present Times.

L O N D O N,

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TWO
LETTERS

TO A

FRIEND

Concerning the

DISTEMPERS

OF THE

Human Mind

THE FIRST
LETTER
CONCERNING
COMPREHENSION,
Written 1667.

Good Cousin,

I Am sorry, that the Parliaments casting out the *Bill of Comprehension* should so much concern you as to put you into such a passion as you exprest against them, and me, at our last nights meeting. Sure the Company you now converse with, and the strange Principles with which they have now posselt you, have alter'd your nature, and turn'd your former reason into prejudice, and unbelief; if not, you would have believed what I did so seriously affirm to be a known truth: namely, *That this Age is not more severe against the disturbers of the settled Peace and Government of the Church and State, than they were in the very happy days of our late and Good Queen Elizabeth.* Some of the Reasons why I said so I do with very much affection tender to your Consideration, and to your Censure too; and, that the last may be the more charitable, and you not apt to make the errours or failings of your Governours, seem more or greater than indeed they are; let me intreat, that you remember what I have very often said to you; namely, *That malicious men* (of whom really I
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do not take you to be one) *are the best Accusers, and the worst Judges.* And indeed I fear it would prove to be a very bitter truth, if some did attain that power which too many labour for in these days, in which *Schism* and *Sedition* are taken to be no sins ; even by men who pretend a tenderness of Conscience in much smaller matters.

And, that I may keep some order, and you be the better satisfied in what I intend in this Letter ; I earnestly intreat that you will at your next leisure read in *Mr. Camdens* true History of the Life and Reign of our Good Queen *Elizabeth* ; in which you may find, what care was then taken to prevent Schism, and the sad confusion that attends it ; and, how the Contrivers of Libels, and dispersers of them, have been severely punish'd ; many of them even to death ; as namely, *Henry Barrow*, and many of his Sectaries for disturbing the publick peace of the Nation, by scattering abroad their monstrous Opinions ; as also, for affirming the Church of *England* to be no true Church ; and the like : Which you may find written by the said *Mr. Camden* in the thirty-sixth year of that Good Queens Reign.

But, I commend more especially to your Consideration, the story and sad death of *Hacket*, and his Adherents ; as namely, of *Wigirton*, *Arbington*, and *Copinger*, all Schismaticks, and of one Sect and Brotherhood : But I say, I do most seriously commend to your Consideration the beginning and death of the said *Hacket* ; who was first a pretender to a tenderness of Conscience, but a Schismatick ; and stopt not there, but became by degrees, so fully possess'd by the evil spirit, the spirit of pride and opposition, that he publickly reviled the Queen, the Archbishop of *Canterbury*, and the Lord Chancellour ; and being transported with a furious Zeal did at last become from a Schismatick to be so infamous an Heretick, that he was condemn'd to death for his abominable Errors ; at which time he reviled and curs'd his Judges ; and died blaspheming and reproaching his Creator : This you may read in the Thirty-fourth year of Queen *Elizabeth*, as it is written by honest learned *Mr. Camden*, who concludes this sad story of *Hacket* with this observation, *Thus doth the enemy of Mankind bewitch those men whom he seeth are not content to be wise unto sobriety.* These stories I say, and too many like them, you may find in

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Mr. *Cambdens* History of Queen *Elizabeth*; and you may find the like in Bishop *Spotswoods* History of the Church of *Scotland*; and also find the like in Mr. *Fullers* History of the Church of *Great Brittain*; in which you may observe what labour hath been used by the discontented Non-conformists to unsettle the Government of the Church of *England*, and consequently of the State; and may there also find, how severely many of them have been punished: So that you need not wonder at what I said last night; nor think *these the only times of persecuting men of tender Consciences.*

And for the better confirmation of what I now write, I will refer you to one testimony more, in the time of our late peaceful King *James*: Which testimony you may view in the second Volume of the Reports of Judge *Crook*, a man very learned in the Law. But, I shall first tell you the occasion of that Report, which was this, "The Non-conformists (which are in that Report called by the name of *Puritans*) had given out that *the King had an intent to set up or give a Toleration to Popery*; and, they had also compos'd a large Petition complaining of the severity of some usage, and of some Laws that concerned themselves; and desired that the severity of those Laws might be mitigated; these and other like desires were in the said Petition; to which they had procured not less than seven hundred hands; and the close of the Petition was, *That if these desires were not granted, many thousands of his Subjects would be discontented*: Which indeed was not a threatening, but was understood to be somewhat like it.

This report of his Majesties intent to set up or tolerate Popery, begot many fears and discontents in the Nation, and to prevent greater disturbances the King did appoint many of his Privy Council, and all the Judges of the Land, to meet together in the *Star-Chamber*; in which Assembly the Lord Chancellor declared to them the occasion of this their publick Convention; and asked the Judges this following question: (*As you may read it in the very same words in the said learned Judges Reports in the second year of the Reign of King James.*)

Whether it were an offence punishable, and what punishment they deserved, who framed Petitions and collected a multitude of

bands thereto, to prefer to the King in a publick cause as the Puritans had done, with an intimation to the King, that if he denied their Suit, many thousands of his Subjects would be discontented.

Whereunto all the Judges answered, that it was an offence finable at discretion, and very near Treason and Felony in the punishment; for, they tended to the raising Sedition, Rebellion, and Discontent among the People: To which Resolution all the Lords agreed. And then many of the Lords declared, That some of the Puritans had raised a false rumour of the King, That he intended to grant a Toleration to Papists: Which offence the Judges conceived to be bawinously finable by the Rules of the Common Law, either in the Kings Bench, or by the King and his Council; or now, (since the Statute of the Third of Henry the Seventh) in the Star-Chamber. And the Lords severally declared, How much the King was discontented with the said false rumour, and had made but the day before a Protestation to them, that he never intended it; and, that he would spend the last drop of blood in his body, before he would do it; and prayed, That before he or any of his Issue should maintain any other Religion than what he truly professed and maintained, That God would take them out of the World.

This you may find in that Report of that Learned Judge, as it was left among many other of Reports, all exactly written with his own hand; and, as they are now published by Sir Harebottle Grimstone, who is now the worthy Master of the Rolls. And you may note, that the said Reports were published in the year 1658. at which time, *Oliver* the Tyrant was in his full power; and, you may there find, that even all *Olivers* Judges allowed these Reports to be made publick, and subscribed their Names to them; and with *Oliver's* consent doubtless. For, he had found, that those very Non-conformists, whose Sedition helpt him into his power; became after a short time as restless and discontent with him, as they had been with their lawful King; and indeed as willing to pull him down, as they had been diligent to set him up.

Dear Cousin! these Places, to which I have referred you, for a Testimony of what I said, are not to be doubted; and, though you would not then give any credit to what I
assured

assured you I knew to be a truth; yet I hope you now will: If not, search, and you shall find them true.

And now seriously Sir! let me appeal to your own Conscience, and ask (though you would not then believe me) how easily would you have given credit to any stranger, that had brought you news of any error committed by any *Bishop* or their *Chaplains*; or by any of the *Conformable Clergy*, though there were not any reasonable Probability for it. Dear Cousin, consider what I say, and consider there is a great stock of *innocent blood* to be answered for; not only the blood of our late *Virtuous King* and the blood of the *Archbishop of Canterbury*, and the Lord *Sirafford*, whose deaths were occasioned by the indiscreet zeal and restless fury and clamours of the Non-conformists: And not only the blood of these, but the ruine of many good and innocent Families, that now eat the bread of sorrow, by being impoverished and undone by these troublesome Pretenders to Conscience; and which is worse, there is a corruption of the innocence and manners of the greatest part of the Nation to be answered for; and all this occasioned by our late Civil War; and that War, occasioned by the fury and zeal of the discontented restless Non-conformists; and them only; and note, that till then we knew not the name of *Independents*, or of *Seeker*, or *Quaker*. Cousin, these are the sad effects of these busie-bodies; many of whom God hath still so blinded that they cannot yet see the Errors they have run themselves and the Nation into; nay, that would imbroil it again into greater ruine than not be complied with in their peevish desires, which they miscall tenderness of Conscience. Dear Cousin, I will not say all; but indeed, too many of the men with whom you comply, and do so much magnifie, are too like *Simeon* and *Levi*, that were Brethren in this Iniquity. And as you love the peace of the Church, in which you were Baptized; and the peace of the Land in which you were born, and the Laws by which you enjoy what you have; nay, as you love the peace of your own Soul, draw back, and let it not enter any more into their Councils or Confederacy; but at last take notice that though neither you, nor any of your Associates scruple at the sin of *Schism* or *Sedition*, but rush into it without Consideration or fear, even as a Horse rushes into

the battel; yet, I pray take notice that *St. Paul* in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, reckons it with the deeds of the flesh, even with *Murder* and *Witchcraft*, which you so much abhor; and let me tell you, many think *Sedition* a more hainous sin than they, by reason of the more evil and destructive effects of it: for, *Murder* may become so by taking away the life of but one single person: And *Witchcraft* hath its limits and bounds set to it, perhaps so as not to take away the life of any man, but only to do mischief to a single person, or a Family, and must end there. But who knows the limits of *Sedition*? Or, when the fire is kindled, which is intended by seditious men, who can, who is able to quench it? And for some proofs of the miserable effects of it, though I might give you too many instances of them in former times; yet I will only refer you to the late *Long Parliament* now fresh in memory, and the woful effects of that Civil War, begot and maintained by schismatical, seditious, discontented men, that believed themselves fit to be Reformers, when God knows well they were not.

And for the sorrow you express for those men of tender Consciences, that are scandalized at *wearing a Surplice, kneeling at receiving the Sacrament, the Cross in Baptism*, and the like; and would have them therefore taken away, that so many, so learned, and so godly Men might by taking them away, be brought to a Conformity. and made capable of preaching the Gospel, which otherwise they cannot do, by being scandalized at these Ceremonies:

I now ask you, What if more men, and more learned men, and more godly men, and as tender-conscienced men, shall be scandalized by their being taken away? What care will you, or those of your Party, take for their tender Consciences? Nay, I ask again, What if we forget or neglect the tender Consciences of our own Party, and comply with yours? What security can you or they give us, that this shall satisfy them so as to ask no more when this is granted? Or, that a year hence their Disciples, or their Successours shall rest satisfied with what is now desired or granted? Really, I cannot think any security can be given, but that all this being granted, yet any man of a melancholly, or a malicious, or a peevish, or a fantastical, or a wanton Conscience; or a Conscience

ence that inclines to get reputation, and court applause, may call his own a tender Conscience, and become seditious, and restless, if his tender Conscience be not complied with: And so no end of their desires, nor any more safety by granting what is desired.

I shall next endeavour to satisfy your desire, or rather your challenge, why I go so constantly to the *Church Service*; and my answer shall be all in love and in sincerity.

"I go to adore and worship my God who hath made me of
"nothing, and preserved me from being worse than nothing.
"And this Worship and Adoration I do pay him inwardly in
"my Soul, and testify it outwardly by my behaviour; as
"namely, by my Adoration, in my forbearing to cover my
"head in that place dedicated to God, and only to his Ser-
"vice; and also, by standing up at the profession of the
"Creed, which contains the several Articles that I and all
"true Christians profess and believe; and also by my standing
"up at giving *Glory to the Father, the Son, and to the Holy*
"*Ghost*; and confessing them to be Three Persons, and but one
"God.

"And (secondly) I go to Church to praise my God for my
"Creation and Redemption, and for his many deliverances of
"me from the many dangers of my Body, and more especi-
"ally of my Soul in sending me Redemption by the death of
"his Son my Saviour; and for the constant assistance of his
"Holy Spirit; a part of which Praise I perform frequently in
"the Psalms, which are daily read in the Publick Congre-
"gation.

"And (thirdly) I go to Church publicly to confess and
"bewail my sins, and to beg pardon for them, for his merits
"who died to reconcile me and all Mankind unto God, who
"is both his and my Father; and as for the Words in which
"I beg this mercy, they be the Letany and Collects of the
"Church, composed by those learned and devout men whom
"you and I have trusted to tell us which is, and which is not
"the written Word of God; and trusted also to translate
"those Scriptures into *English*. And in these Collects you
"may note, that I pray *absolutely* for pardon of sin, and for
"grace to believe and serve God: But I pray for *health*, and
"*peace*, and *plenty*, *conditionally*, even so far as they may tend
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"to his Glory, and the good of my Soul, and not further:
 "And this confessing my sins, and begging mercy and pardon
 "for them; I do in my adoring my God, and by the humble
 "posture of kneeling on my knees before Him: And in
 "this manner, and, by reverend sitting to hear some chosen
 "parts of Gods Word read in the Publick Assembly I spend
 "one hour of the Lords day every Forenoon; and half so
 "much time every Evening. And, since this uniform and
 "devout custom, of joyning together in *Publick Confession*,
 "and *Praise*, and *Prayer*, and *Adoration* of God, and in one
 "manner, hath been neglected, the power of Christianity
 "and humble Piety is so much decayed, that it ought not to
 "be thought on, but with sorrow and lamentation: And, I
 "think especially by the Non-conformists.

And lastly, (for I am tedious beyond my intention) where-
 as you, and your Party, would have the Bishops and Cathedral-
 Church Lands sold to supply the present necessities of the Na-
 tion; I say, first, God prevent the Nation from such neces-
 sities, as shall make them guilty of so many Curses as have been
 by the Doners of those Lands intailed with those Lands upon
 those men, that alienate them to any other use than for the use
 of those that shall serve at God's Altar, to which end the Priests
 Portion was kept with Care and Conscience till the days of
 King Henry the Eighth, who is noted, to make the first breach
 of those Oaths that were always taken and kept by his Pre-
 decessors, and taken by himself too, to preserve the Church-
 Lands; and it is noted, that he was the first Violator of those
 many Laws made also to preserve them; out of which Lands
 he took, at the dissolution of the Abbies, a part for himself;
 exchanged a part with others, that thirsted to thrive by the
 dissolution; and gave the rest to be shar'd amongst the Com-
 plying Nobility, and other Families, that then were in great-
 est power and favour with him; concerning which (if you
 desire a further information) I refer you to a little Treatise
 written by the Learned Sir Henry Spelman, (called *De non
 temerandis Ecclesiis*,) and especially to the Preface before it;
 in which you may find many sad Observations of the said
 King; and find there also, that more of the Nobility, and
 those other Families, and their Children that then shared the
 Church-Lands, came to die by the Sword of Justice, and
 other

other eminent misfortunes in twenty years, than had suffered in four hundred years before the dissolution; and for a proof of which, he refers you to the Parliament Rolls of the twenty-seventh of that King.

And to me it seems fit that the Observations of the ruine, and misfortune of the other Families that were sharers of the Church-Lands, made by that pious and learned Knight since the said twenty years, (which he left written) are not also made publick; but, possibly they may pare too near the quick, and are therefore yet forborn.

I will say nothing of Queen *Elizabeth*; but for King *James*, I will say he did neither follow King *Henry's*, nor her Predecessor; and his Children's Children sit this day upon his Throne. And for his Son, *Charles* the First, (who is justly called the *Martyr for the Church* :) He had also well considered the Oaths taken by all his Ancestors, and by Himself too at his Coronation, to preserve the *Lands and Rights of the Church*; and therefore in his Book of Penitential Meditations and Vows, made in his sad Solitude and Imprisonment, at *Holmby*; you may, in that Chapter of the *Covenant* there find, that at that time when he apprehended Himself in danger of death, yet, that this was then his Resolution.

The principal end of some men in this Covenant is the abusing of Episcopacy into Presbytery, and of robbing the Church of its Lands and Revenues; But I thank God as no man lay more open to the sacrilegious temptation of usurping them, (which issuing chiefly from the Crown, are held of it, and can legally revert only to the Crown with my consent) so I have always had such a perfect abhorrence of it in my Soul, that I never found the least inclination to such sacrilegious reformings; and yet no man hath a greater desire to have Bishops and all Church-men so reformed, that they may best deserve and use, not only what the pious munificence of my Predecessors have given to God and the Church, but all other additions of Christian bounty.

But no necessity shall ever (I hope) drive me or mine to invade or sell the Priests Lands; which Pharaoh's Divinity and Joseph's true Piety abhorred to do. I had rather live, as my Predecessor Henry the Third sometimes did, on the Churches Alms, than violently to take the Bread out of the Bishops and Ministers mouths.

There are ways enough to repair the breaches of the state without the ruins of the Church; as I would be a restorer of the one, so I would not be an Oppressor of the other, under the pretence of publick debts; the occasions of contracting them were bad enough, but such a discharging of them would be much worse. I pray God neither I nor mine may be accessary of either.

Sir, I have been longer than I intended; for which I crave your pardon; and beg of God, that you may at last see and well consider the many errors that your indiscreet zeal hath led you into; and that you and your Party may see also the many miseries it hath helpt to bring upon others; and that for the remainder of your days you and they may redeem the time past, by repenting your indiscreet zeal, and *study to be quiet, and to do your own business*; to this I shall encourage you, and that done, to live as unoffensively to others, and as strictly to your self as you do intend, and by God's grace added to your endeavours, he shall make you able; and I humbly beseech Almighty God, that you and I may daily practise an humble and a peaceable piety, so humble and peaceable a piety as may stop the mouths of all gain-sayers; for, it is certain such holy and quiet living will bring peace at the last. And in this the Almighty God give me grace to be like you.

Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, 1 Thel. 4. 11.

February the 18.
1667.

Your Affectionate Friend,
and Cousin,

R. W.

THE SECOND LETTER.

Dear Cousin,

I Return you, my unfeigned thanks for your Letter of the 15. instant, which I received three days past; it was mixt with love and anger, but I shall in this my answer, observe what you so earnestly desire; namely, not to justify the Errors or Irregularities of those that you call *my Party*, or *my Clergy*. And for some testimony, that I will do what I profess, I will begin with a Confession, that I think as you say; That when a Clergy-man appears in a long, curled, trim *Periwig*, a large *Tippet*, and a silk *Cassock*, or the like vain and costly Cloathing: If he preaches against Pride, and for Mortification, his Hearers are neither like to believe him, or practise what he preaches, either then, or at other times, though what he says be an undoubted truth: Because *Example* is of greater power to incline men to Vice, than *Precepts* have to persuade to Virtue. And I wish as heartily as you do, that all such Clergy-mens Wives as have silk Cloaths, be-daubed with Lace, and their heads hanged about with painted Ribands, were enjoyned Penance for their pride: And their Husbands punisht for being so tame, or so lovingly-simple, as to suffer them; for, by such Cloaths, they proclaim their own Ambition, and their Husbands folly.

And I say the like, concerning their striving for Precedency; and for the highest places in Church-Pews.

And I wish as heartily as you do, that double Benefices were not dispensed with, to such an inconvenience as is now too visible. And that no *Dispensations* might be granted for any

man to be *Prebend*, or, *Canon-Residentary* of two Churches: Such as *Westminster* and *Durham*; or *Windfor* and *Wells*: Because *Residence*, and the other duties, required in those places, is not consistent with their distance from each other; nor, with the Donors intention: And also, because such a single *Prebend*, is a fair support for an humble Clergyman, and if he be proud or covetous, he deserves not so much.

And, I confess also, what you say of a Clergy-mans *bidding to fast* on the Eves of Holy-days, in *Lent*, and the *Ember Weeks*: And I with those biddings were forborn, or better practised by themselves; for it is too visible they do not what the Church for good reasons enjoyns them; and they others, in the Churches name.

And, I wish as heartily as you can, that they would not only read, but pray, the Common Prayer; and, not huddle it up so fast, (as too many do) by getting into a middle of a second Collect, before a devout Hearer can say Amen to the first.

But, you ought to consider, that there be Ten thousand Clergy-men in this Nation, (for there are Nine thousand Parish Churches in it, besides Colledges and Chappels) and the number of them that be thus faulty are not many, when compared with those that be grave, and regular: And, I could name many of the *Episcopal Clergy*, whose lives are so *Charitable, Humble*, and *Innocent*, that they might say to their Parishioners, as *St. Paul* of himself to his *Philippians*, *Walk so as you have me for an Example*. But, I must confess there are too many that do not live so; and, with whom I am as much offended, as you express your self to be.

And now, having unbowelled my very soul thus freely to you, and I protest, as sincerely and truly as I can express my self: My hope is, that I shall in what follows appear to be so uninterested in any Party, that where I speak evident truth and reason, you will assent unto it; in which hope, I will endeavour to lay before you, in my plain way, the many inconveniences, that would I think follow, if that liberty were granted which you and your Party have so long, and do still so earnestly strive for; the effects of which liberty would be *Schism*, *Heresy*, *Rebellion*, and *Misery*, from which God prevent us.

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I did in a Letter, writ now some years past, endeavour to unbeguile your Brother : And, though it did not at that present wholly do what I designed ; yet it abated so much of that furious zeal that had prepossessed him, that he declared on his death-bed, “ The remembrance of those hours spent in devotion, and acts of Charity, were then his comfort, and those “ spent in disputes, and opposition to Government, were now “ a Corrosive, or (as *Solomon* says of ill-gotten riches) *like gravel in his teeth*. And my dear Cozen, in hope of the like good success, I shall, in the following part of my Letter, commend the same, or like Arguments to your consideration in order to the undeceiving you : And I shall not be so curious for words or method, as diligent to speak reason and truth plainly, and without provocation.

And first, I will consider our happiness that were born, baptized, and do now live in the *Church of England*, which is believed by the most learned of all Foreign Churches, to be the most *Orthodox* and *Apostolical*, both for *Doctrine* and *Discipline*, of all those very many that have reformed from the corruptions of the *Church of Rome*. And I think it is worthy your noting ; that those *Bishops* and *Martyrs*, that assisted in this Reformation, did not (as *Sir Henry Wotton* said wisely) think *the farther they went from the Church of Rome, the nearer they got to heaven*, (for they might go too far) but, they did with prudent and deliberate consideration, retain what was consistent with Gods Word, and the practice of the most *Apostolical*, *Primitive*, and purest times ; as may appear by the many unanswerable reasons that have been given against both the *Non-Conformists* and *Papists* that have excepted against our Reformation : The first, for *retaining too much* ; and the latter, for *not enough*. For you ought to note, that neither of them have ever writ against the *Doctrine* or *Discipline* of this Church, but they have received answers to their damage. And this being considered, you ought to lay to heart the disturbance that many of you, that pretend to tenderness of Conscience, have formerly made, and do still make, in this Church and State, even at this present time. And you ought to consider, that if this Church were overthrown, the *Church of Rome* would make it their great advantage ; and therefore many of them do encourage and assist you in this present disturbance, and

for no other end : And therefore, look about you in time, and do not say, when it is too late, *You meant not to bring in Popery* : But remember I once told you, there was a Lawyer that was so ignorant, that he thought he spoke against his Clients Adversary, when he spoke for him, and meant it not. And after such a manner you act for the *Church of Rome* : For let me tell you, that if ever *Popery* or a *standing Army*, be set up in this Nation, (which God grant I may never see) it is the indiscreet zeal, and restless activity of you and your Party that will bring both in, though you mean it not.

Let me ask you seriously, Can you think the powerful man, that is now become of the Romish Church, did love you so much, or, like your Principles so well, as to get a Suspension of the Laws against Conventicles, because he liked your Opinions, or your Practices, when the power was in your hands, in the time of the late mischievous Long Parliament 1640 ? Or can you think, he or his Party did hold a Correspondence with some of the Chief of your Party, for any other end, but to assist in the ruine of the *English Church* ? no doubtless ; for they know, and, you ought to consider, that if that were but down, there were no visible bank to stop the stream of *Popery* : And then, farewell the liberty and care of tender Consciences : There would be an end of that cajouling and flattery.

And next, let me ask you this friendly question : Do you think there is such a sin as *Heresie* ? And if you think there be, let me ask you, Whether he that holds *Heretical Opinions* should be suffered to go up and down to poyson and persuade others to his belief ? And if you believe he ought not so to do, then I ask, Whether *Heresie* can be known to be *Heresie*, or prevented, or punished, but by some power trusted in the hands of some Person or Persons whom the highest Power hath chosen and trusted to judge what is *Heresie* : And then, prevent, or suppress and punish it. And if you grant this, (which no man of reason will deny) I hope you will grant Clergy-men, whose time hath been spent in such studies as have enabled them to know *truth* and *falsehood*, are the fittest to Judge what is *Heresie* : And if you grant this, then these judges must have some name to distinguish them from others of the inferiour Clergy. And, if by a name of distinction ? I hope
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the known name of *Bishop* (or Church Governour) which is so frequently used in Scripture, and the Writings of all the Fathers of the Church, and so well known in this and all Nations, will not be by you excepted against.

And this is told you in order to remembring you, that in the time of the late Long Parliament, 1640. the common Citizens had been so madded, by the discourse and Sermons of the Nonconforming Ministers, (which pretended tenderness of Conscience) that they, being possess'd with a furious zeal, went by troops to the Parliament at *Westminster*, clamoured, and affronted the Bishops, as they went thither, and cried out, *No Bishops! no Bishops!* that is to say, No Judges of *Heretic* or *Schism*: No punishing of these, which you call sins; but, we know are not: We know what is truth, and resolve to do what is good in our own eyes. And by such clamours, and, the malicious, misguided, and active Zeal that then possess'd those people, and a minor part of the Parliament then sitting: The major and more prudent part of it, were so affronted, and threatned, that they appeared not; and in their absence, the *Bishops* voted as useles, as the said Zealous and Ignorant Common people had desir'd.

And now the hedge of Government, and punishment being broken down: *Dell*, the *Arch-Heretic*, Printed his Book against the *Holy Ghost*; and that, and so many such other *Heresies* and *Blasphemies* were then Vented, Printed, and Justified: as I am neither willing to remember, or name.

My good Cousin, this was the effect of that ignorant zeal then; and, to this it tends now again: And to this it will come, if God be not so good to this sinful Nation, as to make the Women, the Shop-keepers, and the middle-witted People of it, less busie, and more humble and lowly in their own eyes, and to think that they are neither called, nor are fit to meddle with, and judge of the most hidden and mysterious points in *Divinity*, and Government of the *Church and State*: And instead of being *Busie bodies*, (which *St. Peter* accounts to be a sin, 1 *Pet.* 4. 15.) to follow that counsel which *St. Paul* gives to his *Thessalonians*, *To study to be quiet, and to do their own business*, 2 *Thes.* 4. 11.

I have told you, how the major part of the Parliament, and the *Bishops* were used by the minor part, and those pretenders

The Second Letter.

pretenders to Conscience, that were of their Party. Now, give me leave to tell you, how these zealous men, having gotten into all power, used the two *Universities* of this Nation, and those of the Beneficed Clergy, that would not violate those Oaths they had taken, both when they took their degrees in the *University*, and at their entering into *Holy Orders*, at their being made *Deacons* and *Priests*: As also, their Oaths to the *Bishop* at their admission into their spiritual Livings, and the care of Souls.

And first for the usage of the *Universities*: Doubtless, all rational and uninterested men cannot but think the *Universities* fittest to make or judge of all lawful or unlawful Oaths: As also, of obedience to Governours: But it was so far otherwise, that very unlearned, and very unfit men, were sent to Visit, judge, and reform them. And, by them was also sent the *Covenant*, and other Oaths to be taken without disputing; to be taken, even by all, from the lowest *Graduate* to the highest in *Order* or *Power*; or to lose their subsistence by being expelled both their Colledges and the *University*. And this was executed with very great strictness, and as much cruelty, by these pretenders to tenderness of Conscience.

And in like manner were all conformable *Beneficed Ministers* used by a Committee of *cruel* and ignorant *Triers*; who were to examine and judge of their *Learning*, and their measures of *Grace*: And if they were by them judged defective in either, then they were unfit to hold their good Livings; And by this means, and their imposing the *Covenant* and other Oaths, and their refusing to take them, those good Livings became void, and fit for those *Triers* themselves, or their Friends, that had *Learning* and *Grace*; (and *Gratitude* too.) And they were quickly got into possession, and the right Owners as quickly imprisoned for not taking the *Covenant*, and other Oaths, contrary both to their Consciences, and the many Oaths they had formerly taken.

Solomon in his Book of Wisdom, Chap. 2. makes the wickedness of the ungodly first to blind them; and then he makes them to say, *Our power is the Law of righteousness*. And such was the Power and Law of these *Triers*, and such was their cruel usage of that Power; as was too sadly testified by the great suffering

suffering of the *Conformable Clergy*: Many, whose great poverty and other sufferings were such, and undergone with so much patience, and so calm a fortitude (for many had Wives, and many Children) that I protest, I heard a very considerable *Papist* say in those times, *That if their Clergy would have suffered half so much in the days of King Edward the Sixth, the Religion of the Protestants had never prevailed in England.* Which saying seemed to me very considerable.

And I think this to be considerable also; That those *Tryers*, and their Brethren of the several Committees, came by degrees to distinguish themselves from others, by calling themselves, *The Godly Party*; And by degrees came to such a confidence that they only were so; that they made God to be as cruel and ill natured a God as they were men: Not allowing him to save any, but themselves, and their Party.

But I will urge this no farther; lest the truth I write seem too bitter.

But I return to what may seem more considerable, and probably less provoking.

I do observe, that your Party that scruple many small things, scruple not at the great sin of *Schism*: I think, they do scarce consider, or think there is such a sin. And this is the more to be wondered at, because, in all the Reformed Churches in *Foreign Nations* they think otherwise, and punish it. And they think the *Doctrine*, and *Discipline*, and *Publick Worship* of God in our Church to be most *Apostolical*, and most agreeable to the *Word of God*: And many of them with theirs were like to ours. And, for a testimony of this, I refer you to a view of their several approbations of it, as they be collected and summed up, and lately published by Dr. *Durell*, sometimes Preacher of the Reformed *French Church* in the *Savoy* in *London*.

And for one testimony that the sin of *Schism* ought to be better considered, and carefully avoided by all people, I shall in what follows give you a relation that may prove I am not singular in this opinion: Wishing most affectionately that it may prove as useful as it is true, and as I intend it.

In the late persecution of the *Conformable Clergy*, there was Dr. *Eleazer Duncon*, a Prebend, (I think of *Ely*, or
D *Durham*)

Durham;) a man of singular learning, and of an unblemish'd life; but sequestred he was; and you may guess why. This good man being sequestred, and so made useless as to the service of Gods Church publickly: And being independent of the world, as to Wife and Children; and weary of beholding the ruine of so many sacred Structures, the cruel usage, contempt, and poverty of the Conformable Clergy, (for many of them had Wives and Children) resolv'd to spend some part of the remaining part of his life in travel: And thereby to inform himself by conference and observation, what the belief and publick Worship of God was, both in the Greek and all the Latine Churches; not only those that depend, but those that be independent on the Church of *Rome*; and he did so, to his great satisfaction: And after some years so spent, in his return homeward (which was in the year 1648.) he took *Venice* in his way: To which place he came indispos'd as to his health; and immediately fell into a dangerous Fever.

This good man was in his long Travel so noted for his learning, and the sanctity of his life, that the day after his arrival in *Venice* he was sent to by *Father Fulgentio*, who had been the Pupil, and was now the Successor to *Father Paul* in his Colledge of the Service (*Father Paul* and *Fulgentio* are both so known and valued by all the learned of *Italy*, and all other Christian Nations, that they neither need my Character or Commendations) to enquire his health, and an offer of advice to procure it. And, in order to both, he would wait on him next day, if he pleas'd to allow it. The last of which being thankfully accepted; the Father did the next day at a seasonable hour make him a charitable visit: And after a loving and quiet Conference, the Father having treated him with words of Christian compassion, offer'd him a supply of money if he need'd; and being ready to take his leave, told the Doctor, *He and his Colledge should pray for him both day and night.* Which good office the Doctor most humbly accepted of, and after giving thanks, added this:

Father, your Charity is the more perfect, in that you will do this Christian office for one that your Church accounts an Heretick. To which the Father's reply was; "But I do not: I look upon you as a true Catholick; yea, as a Confessor, forced
"out

“out of your Native Country for the profession of the most
“true Religion ; for, I look upon the Church of *England*, as
“I know it by your Liturgy, Articles and Canons (I know
“not your practice) to be the most Apostolical Church in the
“whole World, and the Church of *Rome* to be at this time
“the most impure.

After which ingenuous profession, the Father observing the
Doctor to grow faint and uneasy, left him for that time ; but,
after the Doctors recovery, and during his stay in *Venice*, the
Father and he had many free and friendly discourses, of the
same subject, in one of which, the Doctor said :

*Father, your Confession of the impurity of the Roman Church
and the 18. of your own Objections, lately shew'd to me against it,
require an Apology for your continuing in that Communion.*

To which the Fathers reply was :

“A man may live in an infected City, and not have the Plague;
“My Judgment and publick Practice in Religion are both so
“well known here, and at *Rome*, (and both to my danger
“and damage) that I may continue in it with more safety than
“others : And, separation may be a sin in me, who Judge
“the unity of the Church in which I was baptized and con-
“firmed, and the peace of the State in which I was born, to
“be preferred before my private opinion, interest, or satis-
“faction ; and I think, to commit a *Schism*, and separate from
“that Church, would make me guilty of the sin of a *Scandal*
“justly given ; and therefore live in it, and die in it I must,
“though it be the impurest of Christian Churches. But let
“him that now is not of it, never be of that Church, which
“is so far departed from the Primitive purity, and now
“maintained only by splendour, and the maxims, and practice
“of polity.

“If you doubt the truth * of this
relation, I will give you unquesti-
onable confirmation of it at our
next meeting. It has been longer
than I intended, and I beg your par-
don ; and beg you also, to consider,
with what inconsiderable zeal you
and your Party rush into *Schism*,
and give just cause of *Scandal* by

* The truth needs not
be doubted, by any that
shall first know, that *Father*
Paul writ the History of
the Council of *Trent* : And
then, reads his *Life* as it is
truly writ by his Disciple
and Successour, this *Father*
Fulgentio ; and now Prin-
ted before the said History.

opposing Government, and affronting that Church in which you were born, and baptized, (and I hope confirmed by a Bishop.) I think the doing so, requires your sad and serious consideration. For if there be such sins as *Schism* and *Scandal* (and if there were not, they could not have names in Scripture :) then, give me leave to tell you, I cannot but wonder that you and the scruple-mongers of your Party, should rush into them, without any tenderness, or scruple of Conscience.

And here let me tell you, the Church of *England*, which you oppose, enjoins nothing contrary to Gods Word; and hath summed up in her *Creeds* and *Catechism*, what is necessary for every Christian to know and to do : And can you, that are a Shop-keeper, or private man, think that you are fit to teach and judge the Church, or the Church fit to teach and judge you? Or can you think the safety or peace of the State or Church in which you live should depend upon the scruples and mistakes of a party of the Common People, whose indiscreet and active zeal makes them like the restless *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, *Mat. 13. 15.* who compass Sea and Land to get parties to be of their opinions, and by that means beget confusion in both? No, doubtless : Common reason will not allow of this belief; for a liberty to preach and persuade to your dangerous Principles, would enflame the too hot and furious zeal of so many of your Party; and beget so many more restless and dangerous contentions, that there could be neither quiet or safety in a Nation, but by keeping a standing Army *, which I know you detest, and from the cause of which God deliver us. I have

* Witness the late murder of the Scotch Bishop.

told you often, that *Samuel* says, *1 Sam. 15. 23.* *Rebellion* is like the sin of *Witchcraft*; and I cannot tell you too often that *Schism* is too like that mysterious sin; for when the fire of *Schism* and *Rebellion* is kindled, no man knows where it will end. Consider this, and remember, that *St. Jude* accounts them that make *Sells*, to be fleshly; and not to have the Spirit of God, which too many of your Fraternity pretend to.

And now, after so long seriousness, give me liberty to be so pleasant as to tell you a Tale, by which I intend not to provoke you, but to explain my meaning.

“ There

“ There was a North-Country man, that came young and poor to *London*, to seek that which he call’d his fortune, and it proved to be an Hostler in an Inn of good note in that City, in which condition he continued some years, and by diligence and frugality got and saved so much money, that in time he became the Master of that Inn. And not long after his arrival to that happiness, he sent for three of his Nieces, one to serve him in his Kitchen; and the other two did serve for some years in a like condition in other houses, ’till mine *Host* their Uncle died; who, at his death, left to each of them a hundred pound, to buy each of them a North-Country Husband; and also to each of them ten pound to buy new Cloaths, and bear their charges into the North, to see their Mother.

“ The three Sisters resolved to go together; and the day being appointed, two of them bought very fantastical Cloaths, and as gaudy Ribbands, intending thereby to be noted and admired; but the third was of a more frugal humour, (yet aimed at admiration too) and said she would save her money, wear her old Cloaths, and yet be noted and get reputation at a cheaper rate: For she would hold some singular new fantastical opinion in Religion, and thereby get admirers, and as many as they should; and it proved so.

And doubtless this is the Ambition of many Women, Shopkeepers, and other of the Common People of very mean parts, who would not be admired or noted if they did not trouble themselves and others, by holding some odd, impertinent, singular opinions. And tell me freely, do not you think that silence would become our Cousin Mrs. B— than to talk so much and so boldly, against those Clergy-men, and others that bow at the Altar, (she says at the Altar) and use other like reverence in Churches, where she and her Party are so familiar with God as to use none? And concerning which let me tell you my thoughts, and then leave you to judge. Almighty God in the Second Commandment says, he would have none to bow down or worship a *graven Image*: Intimating, as I suppose, a Jealousie, lest that reverence or worship, which belongs only to him, be ascribed or given to an *Idol*, or *Image*. But, that reverence and worship does belong to him, and was always paid to him, is to me manifest by what the Prophet

David says, *Psal. 3. I will in thy fear worship towards thy holy Temple.* And again, *I will praise thy name, and worship towards thy holy Temple.* And again, *Psal. 132. 138. O let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord.* These and many more might be urged out of the Old Testament. And in the New, you may see it is a duty to worship God. First, St. Paul says, *Heb. 13. 10. We have an Altar.* And you may note, *Rev. 22. 9.* where the Angel that had shewed St. John a Vision, forbade him to fall down to him, but bad him *fall down and worship God.* And again, *Chap. 14. 7. Worship him that made heaven and earth.* I omit more Testimonies which might be multiplied, and shall tell you next, that Churches are sacred, and not to be used prophanelly: For you may note, that our Saviour did, with a divine indignation, *whip the money-changers out of the Temple for polluting it;* and said, *His house should be called the house of Prayer.*

And let me tell you, that in the Primitive times, many of those humble and devout Christians, whose sudden Journeys, or businesses of present necessity, were such as not to allow them time to attend the publick Worship and Prayers of the Church, would yet express their devotion by going into a Church or Oratory, and there bow at the Altar, then kneel and beg of God to pardon their sins past: and to be their director and protector that day; and having again bowed toward the East at the Altar, begin their Journey, or business, and they thought God well pleased with so short a Prayer, and such a Sacrifice.

Much more might be said for bowing at the Altar, and bowing toward the East: But I forbear.

And now let me ask you seriously; Do you think this, which I think to be a duty, ought to be forbore, because our Colin and her Party are scandalized at it? Or do you think when I, in a late discourse, told her, how restless and active her Unkle, and Father, and the rest of the Presbyterian Party had been in promoting the late Confusions, and placing all Power in that Parliament, 1640. that murdered Dr. Laud, the late religious Bishop of Canterbury, the late good and pious King Charles, and were the cause of spilling so much innocent blood, and ruine of so many harmless Families? Can you think hers to be a reasonable excuse: That God had

had determined or appointed this, because we were a sinful Nation.

It shall be granted, that we were (God knows we still are) a sinful Nation : And deserved a heavy punishment ; and God did punish us justly ; but they had no appointment to be the executioners of that Justice : They appointed themselves, first to judge, and then to be the Executioners of his will. And before I pass further, I pray observe, it was Gods Will, *that his only Son our Saviour should be betrayed* : But who would be the *Judas* to do it ? Or the Souldiers that Crucified him ? Or could *Judas* look back with comfort that he was used in betraying him ? I hope it is far from your thought to think or say so.

Let me tell you, that the learned Dr. *Abbot*, the late Lord *Archbishop* of *Canterbury*, that was next before Dr. *Land*, (whose head your Long Parliament cut off) intended to kill a *Buck*, 1621. but the Arrow did so glance, that he kill'd the Keeper immediately. The *Church* of *England* judges sudden death to be a punishment, and therefore prays against it. And though it is certain God would not have punished that Keeper with a sudden death if the Keeper had not deserved it ; and certain also that the good Bishop thought so ; yet he lamented to the last hour of his own life, that his hand was used to bring sudden death upon another. And he testified his sorrow, by what I shall relate to you.

“ After that restless night, which followed this sad accident, he sent early in the morning for the Keepers Wife ; bemoan'd himself to her, and begg'd her pardon ; which being obtained, he settled upon her an annuity, by which she was enabled to live with much more ease and plenty, though probably with less comfort, than if she had still enjoyed her Husband. For her two Daughters, he provided competent portions ; and a better education and settlement for her three Sons, than the Father could probably have made if he had still lived.

“ This he did for them. And as for himself, this sad accident begot in him that which St. *Paul* rejoiced to find in his *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 7.11. even a *godly sorrow*, and *revenge* ; for he kept a severe Weekly Fast, the day that this sad accident befel him, during the remainder of his life ; and died lamenting it.

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Let me stop here, and tell you, it is far otherways with you and your Presbyterian Party, than with this penitent Bishop: For, though it is most certain you were the cause of the late Confusion in the Church, and of the War and Blood that followed it; yet I do not find one of you that lays his hand upon his breast, and says:

Lord what have I done? Lord pardon me. No, you are far from that temper: And, he that considers the temper of the present times, and your restless activity in it, may conclude, you are as willing to begin new Commotions, as you are senseless of the old.

My meaning is not, in saying this to upbraid, or provoke you; but rather to convince and unbeguile you. And that I may the better do that, I will in what follows answer some of the most material of your common objections.

You say, *the Bishops have great revenues, and preach not for it*, to which I will answer you in love: First, you say that the Bishops revenues are much greater than indeed they are: And you seem to repine, because you do not consider, how much must go out of them, by *First-Fruits, Tithes*, and other payments of necessity. And you ought to consider, much must go out in *Bounty and Charity*, and some in *Hospitality and State*. I say in state and attendance: For is it fit that the Judge of all the inferior Clergy of his Diocese, and of many of the Laity, should not have a liberal Revenue, and live in more plenty and splendour than the Common People do, or can do? Doubtless it is necessary; For let him be never so prudent and diligent; so inwardly humble, and outwardly meek, yet if he have not a Revenue to live above the Common People, he must make himself a Companion for them, and lose the reverence due to his *Dignity*; and, by that, make himself both cheap, and contemptible; and he that will consider the necessity of a Bishop's living thus, and the small Revenue that most of the Bishops have, may turn his maligning them their Revenue, into a wonder, how they make their Revenue to do it, and a pity it is no more.

There are indeed, some few of them, whose Revenues do abound; and I think I shall not be mistaken if I say, there have been by them more High-ways mended, and more Hospitals, Schools, and Colledges built and endowed, than by five times

times their number of Lay Lords, or by all the Physicians and Lawyers of this Nation, though very many of their employments, turn to much more profit; and yet, theirs is not repined at.

And let me tell you also, it is not often that any is made a Bishop till the age of sixty years; and then he undertakes the Care and toyl of Government, to prevent *Heretic* and *Schism*, or suppress and punish them; and, as occasion serves, by his writing to defend this Church from the Clamours of the Church of *Rome*, or the restless Sectaries of this. And may not the Revenue of a Bishop be thought a just reward for his forty years past study, and his present care, though he preach not? And yet many of them do preach often, though not weekly. And let me add this to what is said; What if the King should give the Revenue to a Bishop only because he is learned, and condition with him not to preach; or make a Doctor of the Civil Law a Bishop, who is not in Orders, and should not preach, but govern, (which I think he may do,) what is this to you or your Party? You ought to consider this, and that the Bishops Revenues was never theirs, nor yours, nor your Predecessors, nor can any man now living claim it for his. *It is only and most certainly Gods*; given to him by our Kings Predecessors, and our King appoints who shall govern the Church under him, and have the Churches Revenue for their reward.

More might be added, but I am as weary of saying this, as you will be to read it.

Now for Preaching, I praise God I understand my duty both to him and my neighbour, the better by hearing of Sermons. And though I be defective in the performance of both (for which I beseech Almighty God to pardon me) yet, I had been a much worse Christian if I had not frequented the blessed Ordinance of Preaching, which has convinced me of my many sins past, and begot such terrors of Conscience as have begot in me holy resolutions to amend my life, and earnest Prayers to Almighty God, the giver of all grace, to enable me by his grace to perform those holy resolutions: This benefit, and many other like benefits, I, and other Christians have had by Preaching: And God forbid we should ever use it so, or so provoke him by our other sins as to withdraw this blessed Ordinance from us, or turn it into a curse by preaching *Heretic* and *Schism*, which too many have done in the late time of Rebellion, and indeed now do in many Conventicles, and their Auditors think such Preaching is serving God; when God knows it is

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contrary.

contrary. "For can you think to sit an hour in a warm Room, upon an easie seat, your head covered, your mind at rest, and your malicious humour pleased to hear your Governours scandalized, and with their scandals some new needles Notions offered to your consideration; and then their truth or falshood left for you to judge and determine? Can you think you are at this time serving God, or satisfying your own curiosity or malicious humour? doubtless not serving God.

Nay, let it be granted, that you hear nothing but truth preach'd, yet I question whether the direction how you should honour and serve God, be honouring and serving him.

For example, If a Master calls his Servant, and gives him positive directions what he shall do the day following, and the Servant hears him with good attention, but neglects to do what he is directed? Can you think the hearing his Masters direction is serving him? No doubtless, it is not; it is granted he could not have known his Masters will without hearing it, but he serves him not by hearing his direction, but doing his Will.

And the like may be observed, concerning your magnifying *extemporary Prayer* by gifted men in publick: and contempt of the Church *Liturgie*. The first of which you call praying by the Spirit; but doubtless, it was an evil Spirit that *John Lilbourn*, *Hugh Peters*, and many others of your Party prayed by, in the days of *Cromwel* the Tyrant, when they prayed to God to *prolong his life*, to *strengthen his Arm*, and *enable him with zeal and courage*, to perfect what he had so happily begun, and make a thorow Reformation in the Church and whole Nation. And in the same Prayer to libel our late vertuous King, by praying to God, *that if he had not wholly withdrawn his grace*, and given him over to a reprobate sense, that he would at last bring him back from his present evil Council to his great Council the present godly Parliament.

Thus, or to this purpose, was that pious and prudent King libelled in your publick extemporary Prayers. and the Tyrant magnified by those that were so shameless as to call themselves the *godly Party*. And many well-meaning people were so beguiled as to say *Amen* to what was thus prayed. And by this means the Church-*Liturgie* came to be abhorred by some, and neglected by almost all: And can you think, praying thus, and appointing God in their Prayers what he was to do for them, and their Cause, and when, and by what manner and means he was to do it, was honouring and serving him? No doubtless.

God

God forbid, that private Christians should be so tied to set Forms of Prayer, as not in their retired and private devotions to make their private Confessions of their private sins to the searcher of all hearts: and beg their pardon of him, and pray extempore for such a measure of his assisting grace so to strengthen them, that they may never relapse into those, or the like sins: This doubtless is to honour and serve God, but this is but to honour and serve him privately: And if I be mistaken in my private Prayers my mistakes concern only my self, and end there. But it is not so in your *Publick extemporay Prayers*, the mischief is not ended when the Prayers are.

And that these should justle out the well-known, and approved Prayers of the Church, which were composed, and so pathetically and properly worded by the assistance of Gods Spirit, in many of those blessed Martyrs and Confessors, whom he made his Instruments to settle and reform the Church of *England* from the gross Corruptions of that of *Rome*: I say, that you and your Party should not when you consider this, grieve to think it was done by you, is to me a wonder; and I praise God that he makes me look upon it with a thankful detestation.

And now, good Cofin, give me leave to tell you, (as I did your Brother in a Letter writ some years past) what I do (or ought in duty to do) when I make my self a Member of any Christian Congregation, assembled to pay reverence to Almighty God, and pray and praise him according to the Injunction and Custom of our Church.

"First, We all do, I am sure, they that know best, and are
 "most devout do, all kneel, and as many as well may with their
 "faces toward the *East*, and in that order, and humble posture,
 "and, with one consent, all make their general and humble Con-
 "fession of their unworthiness to appear before God, by reason of
 "their many and grievous sins past: And we beg pardon for them,
 "and his grace to serve him the remaining part of our lives
 "with more purity and holiness: And having confest, and prayed
 "thus; if the Searcher of all hearts does bear witness with us, that
 "this Confession and these Prayers be sincere, and that our purpose
 "is to amend our lives, and obey him better: We do, and may
 "put on a modest confidence, that he will assist us with his grace;
 "and be assured, that he is at peace with us, and loves us.

“ And this being done in an humble and ardent manner, we proceed to laud and magnifie our God in a joynt repeating a part of the *Psalms*, which are all compos’d of gratitude, and mercy. And then apply our selves to the hearing some part of Gods holy Word read, for our information and comfort.

“ And then to a publick profession of our Christian Faith. And then we again betake our selves to beg of God, that by his *preventing grace* we may be that day delivered from the temptations and miseries that threaten our souls and bodies; and beg for his *assisting grace* to strengthen us so, that we may oppose and overcome both.

“ And having thus humbly confess’d our sins, and thus profess’d our *Christian Faith*, and thus *begg’d his pardon*, and both his *preventing* and *assisting grace* for the time to come: And all these in such a manner as they be all, most pathetically express’d in the several Collects of our Church-prayers: The Congregation is dissolv’d with the Priests blessing; and all betake themselves to their several employments.

“ And for my part I think God and his holy Angels look down with joy when they behold a Christian Congregation thus in one manner adoring, and praising God, and praying for the remission of their sins.

Your being so much a stranger to our *Church Prayers*, has inclin’d me to give you this large account of them, and of my own thoughts. I might here undertake also to satisfie your scruples of kneeling at the *Sacrament*, and the Ring in *Marriage*; but there has been so many good reasons given of them, in several small Treatises, for the justification of them, that I will decline that trouble, both for yours and my own sake: And offer unto you the few following observations, and so put an end both of yours and my own trouble.

And, in order to doing this, I desire you to look back with me to the beginning of the late Long Parliament 1640. at which time we were the quietest and happiest people in the Christian World: (And praised be God we yet are so,) we had then a prudent and conscientious King, whose life was a pattern of *Temperance, Patience, Piety*, and indeed of all the Christian Graces. He governed I think by the known Laws of the Nation: Every man sat then under the shadow of his own Vine, and did eat his own Grapes: that is, enjoy’d the benefit of his own labour, and eat his own bread in peace. We had then no need of a *Court of guard* to keep the

the discontented inferiour people from rising against Government : We had then no need to raise those *Monthly Taxes* to pay those *Courts of guard*, and other Charges, that are now come to be of necessity, to secure us from the yet unseen Commotions of a malicious, restless, discontented Party, which were first made so by the example of the *ill-natured Presbyterians* : And continue to be so by retaining the destructive Principles they then taught them ; and which do still threaten us with new Commotions ; thus happy we were then ; and he that considers the present miseries of *Germany, Poland, France* ; and indeed, of all Christian Nations, how many Cities lately were, and at this time are besieged, what devastations, and ravishings, and fears follow running Armies, what terrors and wants those poor distressed people now groan under ! he that considers all this, and compares our present condition with theirs, ought to say, that *England* is at this time the happiest Nation in the Christian world : But our unhappiness is, that peace and plenty will not suffer us to think so, and study to be quiet and thankful.

This, I beseech you to consider seriously ; and good Cousin, let me advise you to be one of the thankful and quiet Party ; for it will bring peace at last. Let neither your discourse or practice be to encourage, or assist in making a *Schism* in that Church in which you were baptized, and adopted a Christian, for you may continue in it with safety to your soul ; you may in it study sanctification, and practise it to what degree God by his grace shall enable you : You may fast as much as you will ; be as humble as you will ; pray both publicly and privately as much as you will ; visit and comfort as many distressed and dejected Families as you will ; be as liberal and charitable to the poor as you think fit, and are able. These, and all other of those undoubted Christian graces, that accompany Salvation you may practise, either publicly or privately, as much, and as often as you think fit ; and yet keep in the Communion of that Church of which you were made a Member at your Baptism. These Graces you may practise, and not be a busy-body, in promoting *Schism* and *Faction* : As God knows your Fathers Friends, *Hugh Peters* and *John Lilbourn* did, to the ruine of themselves, and many of their Disciples. Their turbulent lives, and uncomfortable deaths, are not I hope yet worn out of the memory of many. He that compares them with the holy life and happy death of Mr. *George Herbert*, as it is plainly and I hope truly writ by Mr. *Isaac Walton*, may in it find a perfect pattern for an humble and devout Christian to

imitate: And he that considers the restless lives, and uncomfortable deaths of the other two, (who always liv'd like the *Salamander* in the fire of contention.) and considers the dismal consequences of *Schism* and *Sedition*, will (if prejudice, or a malicious Zeal have not so blinded him, that he cannot see reason) be so convinc'd as to beg of God to give him a meek and quiet spirit, and that he may by his grace be prevented from being a busie-body in what concerns him not.

The reasons that I have offered to your consideration, have crowded so fast into my present memory, that they have made my Letter more perplext, and longer, and indeed some expressions in it bitterer than I intended when I began it: But I beg your pardon for both. And supposing I have it, I will close all with this friendly advice and caution.

Remember you and I are but Citizens, and must take much that concerns our Religion and Salvation upon trust: I will explain my meaning for what I say, and have said, by this following Parable.

"There was a man, that was and continued under so great a mistake, that though he thought and granted his Neighbour to be strong enough to lift a hundred pound weight from the ground, yet could not be brought to believe, or grant, that he was able to lift fifty pound weight from it; which was doubtless a great mistake. But, if you will give me leave, I will explain my self by a more proper Parable, and then make my Application. The same mistaking-man offered, and was willing to lend his Neighbour a hundred pound (though it were his whole Estate) upon his single Bond, but being desired to lend him fifty pound upon his Bond, he durst not trust him with that lesser Sum, lest the Borrower should not be able to repay him: And so he (the Lender) prove to be undone by the Borrowers inability to repay him.

Before I make my Application of what I have told you, give me leave to tell you, the Papists would obtrude upon all Christians a belief that all those doubtful Books, which the Church of England calls *Apocryphal*, were certainly writ by Divine Inspiration, and ought to be of equal Authority with those which we call *Canonical Scripture*; and that the foundation for our faith and manners to God and man may, and must be laid equally upon both. But I think we agree with the Papists concerning all the Books of the

New Testament; that is, that all were writ by Divine Inspiration. But the *Lutherans* deny some part of the *New Testament*, which both the *Papists* and we believe and grant to be writ by Divine Inspiration.

And now for my Application; let me ask you seriously, Are not you like this mistaking-man, that durst trust a greater, but not trust the Borrower with a lesser Sum of money? You have trusted the *Bishops*, and a select Clergy in a Convocation to tell you, *These you shall take to be Canonical Books of Scripture, and no other*; Upon the truth of those, and only those, that they declare to be the *holy Scripture*, you lay the foundation of your Faith, and hope of Salvation. You have trusted the *Bishops*, that is, the *Church of England*; first, their Learning and Wisdom to know, and then their Integrity to tell you truly which is the *blessed and holy Scripture*: With these great and necessary concerns of your Faith and Salvation you have trusted them; and yet, like the mistaking-man, you dare not trust them with what is of less concern: Namely, you do not believe them when they tell you how the Primitive Christians did worship, and praise, and pray to God: And though you have trusted them to translate the Scriptures into English, as being best learned in the Original Languages; yet you dare not, or do not trust them with the explanation of many words which have in the Original an ambiguous or doubtful meaning, especially to us of the Laity, who cannot know the Customs and Phrases of those Nations where our Saviour and his Disciples preached the glad tidings of our common Salvation.

Cosin, I hope I have in this made some unforc'd, and so useful Observations, as an humble and good Christian will not gainsay: And, doubtless, a soul truly humble, will both think and say,

Almighty God hath appointed me to live in an Age, in which Contention increaseth, and Charity decays; and it is certain, that variety of Opinions and Controversies in Religion declare difficulty to know them truly; but my comfort is, *That without Controversie, there is so much Religion without Controversie, as by the true practice of what is so I may save my Soul.* And therefore, to make sure of that, I will first become an humble Christian, and conclude, that I will in all doubtful things obey my Governours, for sure they see a reason, which I neither can, or need to know, why they command them:

them: I will be sure to be *humble*, to *fast* and *pray*, to be *Charitable*, to visit and comfort dejected Families, to love my Neighbours, to pardon my Enemies, and to do good to all Mankind, as far as God shall enable me: For I am sure these be Sacrifices which please Almighty God, and will *bring peace at last*: And, I am sure, that by using these graces, these graces, and my *faith in Christ's Merits for my Salvation*, will be more and more confirmed; and by still using them, more, and more new graces will be still added; and all be still more and more confirmed; so confirmed, as to bear witness with me, and be my comfort when I must make my last and great account to the Searcher of all hearts.

Almighty God give me grace to practise what I have commended to your consideration; for this, and this only, can, and will make my life quiet and comfortable, and my death happy. And, my dear Cousin, as I wish my own, so I wish yours may be.

September 12,
1679.

Your Affectionate Kinsman,

R. W.

THE END.
